



**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN

Follow these procedures: If requested by your instructor, please include an assignment cover sheet. This will become the first page of your assignment. In addition, your assignment header should include your last name, first initial, course code, dash, and assignment number. This should be left justified, with the page number right justified. For example:

DoeJXXX0000-1	1
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Save a copy of your assignments: You may need to re-submit an assignment at your instructor's request. Make sure you save your files in accessible location.

Academic integrity: All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person's work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

EDU7707-8

Dr. Leslie Oja

**Planning Dissertation Research in
Education**

Activity #2: Part I and Part II

Comments: See links to articles below:

<http://proxy1.ncu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edswss&AN=000331216000005&site=eds-live>

<http://proxy1.ncu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=12903415&site=eds-live>

Assignment 2 – Part 1

As a practice you will give articles careful review and understand all of the decisions, assumptions, and arguments the researchers made. You will put together your own complete set of questions to use in interrogating research articles.

For this assignment, review the resources mentioned for this week and put together a list of questions and strategies you will use to critically read research articles for your dissertation.

Length: 1-2 pages not including title and reference pages.

Your paper should demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the ideas and concepts that are presented in the course and provide new thoughts and insights relating directly to this topic. Your paper should reflect scholarly writing and current APA standards. Review [APA Form and Style](#).

Be sure to adhere to Northcentral University's Academic Integrity Policy. View the [Northcentral Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) to refresh your knowledge of how to achieve academic integrity.

Learning Outcomes

- 3.0 Develop a personal “tool kit” for critiquing peer-reviewed, published research studies.
- 4.0 Critique peer-reviewed, published research studies.

Assignment 2 – Part 2

Apply the list of questions and strategies you developed in the previous assignment to two articles describing research that contributes to theory in your topic area. Choose short articles (fewer than 10 pages) if possible.

Submit your analysis of both articles in a single brief paper.

Send your faculty member the articles or links to them. You may organize the paper simply as answers to your Part I questions. Follow APA style only for the reference list.

Length: 3-5 pages not including title and reference pages.

Your paper should demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the ideas and concepts that are presented in the course and provide new thoughts and insights relating directly to this topic. Your paper should reflect scholarly writing and current APA standards. Review [APA Form and Style](#).

Be sure to adhere to Northcentral University's Academic Integrity Policy. View the [Northcentral Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) to refresh your knowledge of how to achieve academic integrity.

- 3.0 Develop a personal “tool kit” for critiquing peer-reviewed, published research studies.
- 4.0 Critique peer-reviewed, published research studies.

Assignment 3 – Due by Sunday, November 16, 2014

Annotated Bibliography – Document attached to use as a guide. The document was taken from the APA Manual 5th edition and no longer included in the 6th edition. The syllabus has errors in format; follow the attached document.

Submit a paper comprised of at least 40 annotated bibliography entries
Length: 150-250 words per entry

Northcentral University Grading Guidelines – Graduate Scoring

Numerical Points	Letter Grade	Descriptor	Explanation
100-94 93-90	A A-	Excellent	Completes all required parts of the assignment, demonstrates deep understanding of materials, uses very clear and effective expression appropriate to scholarly writing, and has very few or no errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
89-87 86 - 83	B+ B	Good	Completes all or most required parts of the assignment, demonstrates good understanding of readings, uses mostly clear and effective expression appropriate to scholarly writing, and has few errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
82-80 79-77	B- C+	Fair	Completes most required parts of the assignment, demonstrates some understanding of the readings, and writing is somewhat clear, effective, and scholarly, and has some errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
76-73	C	Poor	Completes some required parts of the assignment, demonstrates some understanding of readings, and writing is difficult to understand and unscholarly and has several errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
72-0	F	Unacceptable	Completes few required parts of the assignment, demonstrates little understanding of readings, and writing is difficult to understand and unscholarly and has many errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.

Using the Grading Guidelines for Success

A. The Northcentral University Grading Guidelines are designed to ensure that faculty and students have a shared understanding of assignment quality. Carefully reviewing the guidelines can help you plan and complete your assignments to the best of your ability.

B. The grading guidelines are based on four assignment criteria. Keep these in mind as you complete an assignment:

1. Assignment completion (highlighted in **orange**) – the extent to which you have followed assignment instructions.
2. Understanding of materials (highlighted in **green**) – the extent to which you have demonstrated understanding of readings or other materials.
3. Expression (highlighted in **blue**) – the extent to which your expression is clear, effective, and appropriate for scholarly writing.
4. Grammar, mechanics, APA (highlighted in **purple**) – the extent to which you have used correct grammar, word choice, punctuation, APA form and style, and APA formatting.

C. Your instructor will ignore criteria not relevant to an assignment (e.g., discussion posts and reflections need only follow APA formatting for citations and references).

D. Submission of an assignment that is outside of the page length (or slide number) parameters may result in a request for a re-submission that meets the parameters or a one step reduction of a grade (e.g., from A- to B+), at a faculty member's discretion.

Faculty Use Only

<Faculty comments here>

Michael,

Part 1 of Assignment 2 demonstrates an understanding of the purpose for conducting a literature search and reading journal articles in support of a research topic. Refer to the APA Manual chapter 7 for citing sources on a Reference list in APA format.

Assignment 2 – Part 1

Completes **all** required parts of the assignment, demonstrates **deep** understanding of materials, uses **very** clear and effective expression appropriate to scholarly writing, and has **very few** errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting. The Learning Outcomes were met.

A 100%

Assignment 2 – Part 2

Assignment 2 demonstrated in-depth analysis of the journal articles; however, when the assignment states a “brief paper” the assignment should be written in a scholarly voice in essay form. In addition, an analysis includes a comparison and contrast of the articles in relationship to the discussion points made; this format will be used with the milestone papers in the Literature Review section.

There were a number of common writing errors that should be revised. Consistent use of standard American English conventions leads to consistent use of APA form and style (chapters 3 and 4 of the APA Manual). It is essential to develop a scholarly voice when writing for research as writing for research is concise. I provided resources for improving the writing process. In addition, access the NCU Writing Process and the five stages of writing and should be followed for all writing in the program; found at the NCU Academic Success Center. The Academic Success Center has knowledgeable staff that can also be of writing assistance.

Completes **most** required parts of the assignment, demonstrates **some** understanding of the readings, and writing is **somewhat** clear, effective, and scholarly, and has **some** errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.

B- 80% Dr. Oja 11 08 2014

<Faculty Name>

<Grade Earned>

<Writing Score>

<Date Graded>

Writing Assistance

To check standard American English conventions:

<http://www.grammarly.com/>

APA Manual (6th ed.) tutorial:

<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

Guide to Grammar and Writing

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Rosen, L. J. (2012). *The academic writer's handbook* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Longman. ISBN: 9780205717613

❖ Strunk, W. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Longman. ISBN: 9780205309023

Critiquing Research Articles: Part I & II

Michael Higley

Northcentral University

Develop and Apply a Personal Toolkit for Critiquing Research Articles: Part I

Assignment Instructions

For this assignment, review the resources mentioned for this week and put together a list of questions and strategies you will use to critically read research articles for your dissertation.

Length: 1-2 pages not including title and reference pages.

Critically Analyze Research Articles: (Meltzoff, 2004)

1. Is the research question clearly stated? **There could be more than one research question.**
2. What is the problem the study addresses?
3. What is the purpose of the research?
4. Does the introduction, statement of the problem, and general overview adequately set the background for the reader?
5. Are the key terms well defined?
6. What are the possible threats to validity?
7. Is the independent variable appropriate?
8. Are the criterion and the criterion measure of the independent variable appropriate, valid, and reliable?
9. Is the dependent variable appropriate?
10. Are the criterion and the criterion measure of the dependent variable appropriate, valid, and reliable?
11. Is the research design appropriate to test the hypotheses and answer the research question?
12. Are the **methods** and procedures clearly described in sufficient detail to be understood and replicated?
13. Are the participants properly selected?
14. Are the statistical tests appropriate?
15. Is the discussion reasonable in light of the data?
16. Are the conclusions valid and justified by the data?
17. Are ethical standards adhered to in all phases of the research?
18. **What about a theory? A theory supports the research topic.**

Reference

Meltzoff, J. (2004). *Critical Thinking About Research: 7th Edition*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

Critically Read and Analyze Articles: Part II

The following is an analytical critique of a research article entitled “Close Reading as an Intervention for Struggling Middle School Readers” by Fisher and Frey (2014), which includes annotations that can be used later for inclusion in a literature review (Meltzoff, 2004).

1. Is the research question clearly stated? Yes, the research question in this article is clearly defined^[4] however, not clearly stated. Fisher^[5] and Frey (2014) discuss whether there is a cost effective way to provide reading intervention ~~to~~ with students in large groups. The question, which came from this^[6] inquiry, was whether or not teaching students to think about increasingly complex texts is far more effective than teaching students text at their perceived ability level.
2. What is the problem the study addresses? Fisher and Frey (2014) describe an educational world where a variety of academic intervention efforts are employed before and after school in an effort to increase student literacy scores. Additionally, these efforts are reportedly costing schools and other educational institutions millions of dollars each year to implement. However, Fisher and Frey (2014) sustain that research has shown overwhelming evidence that reading interventions are effective at increasing student literacy and achievement scores and therefore, worth further investigation.
3. What is the purpose of the research? The purpose of this study was to determine whether an intervention program with a close reading component would result in higher state achievement scores and increase student literacy.
4. Does the introduction, statement of the problem, and general overview adequately set the background for the reader? Compared^[7] to the article entitled “Struggling Middle School Readers: Successful, Accelerating Intervention” by Dr. Rosemary Papalewis (2004), this

article introduced the problem and defined the overall research in more precisely and in more depth. A paragraph is a minimum of three sentences to adequately develop the subject.

5. Are the key terms well defined? The close reading strategy was described and the implementation process thoroughly defined. Key terms related to the reading strategy were also well defined.
6. What are the possible threats to validity? The possible threats to validity describe in the article were threats to attrition due to schedule changes, attendance issues, and withdrawal from the intervention program. Additionally, student attendance within other subject areas could skew anticipated outcomes resulting from the intervention program.
7. Is the independent variable appropriate? The independent variable identified in this article is the close reading strategy being implemented within the school day as an additional 40-55 minute close reading classroom instruction for the treatment group. The control group was provided with computerized interventions, small group instruction, and independent reading activities in an after school only setting.
8. Are the criterion and the criterion measure of the independent variable appropriate, valid, and reliable? The treatment group classes were focused on reading complex texts within the school day using the close reading strategy.
9. Is the dependent variable appropriate? The dependent variable in this article was identified as student state achievement scores in addition to variables such as attendance, self-perceptions, and program progress.
10. Are the criterion and the criterion measure of the dependent variable appropriate, valid, and reliable? Yes, I believe that the statistical analysis of student state assessment results

and survey used to measure student interest and self-perception were appropriate, valid, and reliable.

11. Is the research design appropriate to test the hypotheses and answer the research question? Yes, the research design isolates the treatment group within the context of the school day providing the close reading intervention strategy. Additionally, the control group is allowed to continue receiving reading intervention after school using standard reading intervention strategies as outlined in Fisher and Frey (2014).
12. Are the methods and procedures clearly described in sufficient detail to be understood and replicated? Each of the dependent variables considered in this research article are clearly described and outlined within the sub sections entitled “Instruments” and “Outcomes From the Intervention” (Fisher & Frey, 2014). The instruments used in this study include the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, a reading survey, an Analytic Reading Inventory, and fluency assessment. Fisher and Frey (2014) describe not only the variables but also the statistical analysis and results of each.
13. Are the participants properly selected? Study participants were selected using an inclusion criterion and from that group of students random assignments were made to either a control or experiment classroom, spread out over three different schools. It appears from the participant design and discussion of outcomes resulting from the statistical analysis these participants were selected correctly and appropriately assigned.
14. Are the statistical tests appropriate? The statistical assessments used to analyze the data appear to be appropriate given an independent t-test and comparisons made using the Reader Self-Perception Scale-2. Additionally, student attendance records were used to discuss the reliability of attendance to help predict the level of influence this variable has

on the independent variable given the multiple threats to validity concerning attendance.

Examples of such threats included the program being optional, parent pick-up, and attendance comparisons between the control and treatment groups.

15. Is the discussion reasonable in light of the data? **Yes**
16. Are the conclusions valid and justified by the data? **Yes**
17. Are ethical standards adhered to in all phases of the research? **It appears, just from my limited knowledge and understanding of research ethics, that the study presented in this article took steps to ensure the participants, research design, and statistical testing was appropriate and ethical.**

The following is an analytical critique of a research article entitled “Struggling Middle School Readers: Successful, Accelerating Intervention” by Dr. Rosemary Papalewis (2004).

1. Is the research question clearly stated? **No, not explicitly, however I was able to ascertain the research questions from the stated purpose, problem statement, and discussion.**
 - What impact does a reading intervention program have on repeating 8th graders?
 - Does an intervention program, such as Read 180, increase student achievement scores in reading and language?
 - Additionally, does an intervention program, such as Read 180, implemented with repeating 8th graders, decrease the chances that those students will dropout of high school?
2. What is the problem the study addresses? **If students cannot read by the 8th grade, the likelihood of dropping out of school is almost given.**

3. What is the purpose of the research? The primary focus was to evaluate the impact of an intervention reading program on students repeating the 8th grade.
4. Does the introduction, statement of the problem, and general overview adequately set the background for the reader? Yes, the introduction sets the stage for the need to implement an intervention program rather than a remedial program to address poor reading skills. Papalewis (2004) states that poor readers are a result of several factors and conditions – poverty, English as second language, and attendance. The case is also made that students who are poor readers and/or repeat the 8th grade are more likely to dropout of high school. Additionally, other factors may actually help improve teaching and learning when the focus is placed on the curriculum and professional development opportunities.
5. Are the key terms well defined? Key terms, specific to the study, is explained throughout the article.
6. What are the possible threats to validity? There are a few threats to validity that I have identified in the study. Social threats to construct validity should be considered in this study. Schedule changes, student behaviors, substitute teachers, and fidelity to the program are all threats, which could have an influence on the dependent variable beyond the identified independent variable in the study. Additionally, interaction of different treatments could be another concern because in addition to the intervention program, students could be receiving reading support through their regular English and Language Arts classes, or other subjects such as Social Studies and Science.
7. Is the independent variable appropriate? The independent variable in this study is identified as the Read 180 program.

8. Are the criterion and the criterion measure of the independent variable appropriate, valid, and reliable? Yes, I believe the quality, fidelity, intensity, and consistency of the Read 180 is research based and proven to be an appropriate, valid, and reliable reading intervention program.
9. Is the dependent variable appropriate? Student NCE achievement scores identify the dependent variable in this study.
10. Are the criterion and the criterion measure of the dependent variable appropriate, valid, and reliable? Given controls of certain variables and threats to validity, student NCE achievement scores are an appropriate measure of student learning and should be considered valid and reliable.
11. Is the research design appropriate to test the hypotheses and answer the research question? Yes, I believe that the research design is appropriate in testing the hypotheses. Using student achievement scores from repeating 8th grade students who participated in the Read 180 program to determine the impact a reading intervention program has on repeating 8th graders is greatly important. Additionally, using student reading and language scores to determine the possible affects of the Read 180 program is also appropriate because student scores is ultimately the quantitative measure of the program's success.
12. Are the methods and procedures clearly described in sufficient detail to be understood and replicated? This article was helpful in determining if the methods and procedures were clearly described because it included a sub-heading entitled "Methods and Procedures." This section outlined the Read 180 program practices and instruction, as

well as the procedures for student selection. Additionally, this section described the analysis of classroom observations to ensure fidelity of the program.

13. Are the participants properly selected? Yes, students were selected based on the research question, which asks if a reading intervention program increases student achievement scores of repeating 8th graders.
14. Are the statistical tests appropriate? The statistical assessments presented in the article appear to be appropriate given the variables used, statistical outcomes, and conclusions made from those variables and outcomes.
15. Is the discussion reasonable in light of the data? Yes, I believe that the discussion was reasonable given the data uses, student achievement.
16. Are the conclusions valid and justified by the data? Yes, the conclusions made from the statistical outcomes appeared to be valid based on the statistical tests used to measure the affects of the independent variable.
17. Are ethical standards adhered to in all phases of the research? This article does not specifically discuss the procedures in ensuring all ethical standards were adhered to during the research process.

References^[8]

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (n.d). Close reading as an intervention for struggling middle school readers. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), ~~pp~~ 367-376. Retrieved from <http://proxy1.ncu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edswss&AN=000331216000005&site=eds-live>

Papalewis, R. (2004). Struggling middle school readers: Successful, accelerating intervention. *Reading Improvement*, 41(1), ~~pp~~ 24-37. Retrieved from <http://proxy1.ncu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=12903415&site=eds-live>

Refer to Chapter 7 of the APA Manual for citing sources in APA format on a Reference list and avoid errors such as inserting pp.